

Berthelot, Hon. Paul, planter, merchant, manufacturer and legislator, was born in St. John Parish, La., Jan. 31, 1859, and is a son of Vailsin and Elmiere (Folse) Berthelot, both natives of the same parish, as was also the paternal grandfather, Firmin Berthelot. The paternal great-grandfather, though he passed the greater part of his life in Louisiana, came originally from France. The paternal grandmother also was born in France and was descended from a noble family. The maternal grandmother, whose maiden name was Troxclair and was born in the vicinity of Bayou Lafourche. The Troxclair family has long been intimately identified with affairs in that locality.

The maternal great-great-grandparents were natives of France. Paul Berthelot was the first of 11 children born to his parents: Evela, the second child, became the wife of Joseph Hoidel of St. Charles parish, who died after 12 children had been born to their union. Laure, the third child, became the wife of George Hymel, a successful planter of St. Charles Parish, and is the mother of 8 children, all of whom are well educated. Edward, the fourth child, died with typhoid fever in 1890, and is survived by 2 children, a son and a daughter. Josephine, the fifth, became the wife of Zepherin Hymel, New Orleans, and is the mother of 10 children. Eleonore, the sixth, married Amelus Haydel, of Lutchet, and 11 children have been born to their union. Virginia, the seventh, is the wife of D. C. Lousdeau, a prosperous planter of St. Charles Parish. Vailsin, Jr., the eighth, died while conducting a store for his brother, near Hymelia, and is survived by 9 children. Elodie, ninth, became the wife of Morris St. Pierre, successful merchant and real estate dealer of St. John the Baptist Parish and 9 children have been born to their union. Joseph and Odele, tenth and eleventh, died in childhood. The mother of these 11 children was previously married to Benjamin Berthelot, and 2 daughters were born to this first union, namely: Velleda, who married Numa Haydel and died after having become the mother of 12 children, all of whom are now married. Marcelite married Octave Bethancourt, of St. John the Baptist parish, and died, leaving no children. Mr. Bethancourt was afterwards remarried.

During the Civil War he had some strange experiences and seems to have escaped death miraculously. Paul Berthelot received his education at private schools, working throughout the day to enable him to pay for instruction at night. At the age of 16 years, having saved a little money for that purpose, he went to New Orleans and became a student of St. Mary's Academy, where he learned to speak English. After 2 years at this institution he returned home and assisted his father in the cooper business until he had accumulated \$1,000, when he began on his own account at Plaquemine with William Slaughter as a partner in a cooper shop. In 1886, he returned to St. John the Baptist Parish and engaged in mercantile pursuits and farming. In 1904, associated with Joseph Haydel, he purchased Trinity Plantation, and in 1907 bought his partner's interest in this property, but disposed of it in 1911. He has owned Lucy Farm, since 1886, and now lives upon this place, which is maintained in a high state of cultivation. Mr. Berthelot also conducts a large general merchandise business and operates a canning plant, putting up fruits, vegetables and pure cane syrup under formulae furnished by the agricultural department of the United States. Mr. Berthelot is affiliated with the Democratic Party, and has

acted in various official capacities. In 1888 he was elected to the police jury and served 8 years as a member of that body. In 1896 he was elected to the legislature, being, it is said, the first white man to hold the office since the Civil War, and succeeding a Negro who had held office 20 years as representative from St. John the Baptist parish. This was one of the backward parishes in the state in getting rid of the "carpet-bag" regime. During the session of the legislature that followed, Mr. Berthelot served on the land and levees, railroad and other committees, and in the same year of his election he was appointed by Gov. Foster as a member of the levee board. In 1900 he was elected sheriff and tax collector of St. John the Baptist Parish and has so continued to this time.

He has been a member of the Democratic Central Committee of the state during the past 20 years, judicial and senatorial district committee 16 years, congressional district committee a like time. Four successive times he was alternate delegate to the national democratic conventions, and was a delegate to the Baltimore Convention, at which Pres. Wilson was nominated.

On Feb. 22, 1880, Mr. Berthelot was married to Olivia Necomedé, daughter of Fortune Louis Cestia of New Orleans. Mr. Cestia came from Guadeloupe, Lesser Antilles, at the age of 17 years, and was for a time connected with the Daily Bee, of New Orleans. He occupied various positions under the city administration and as a commissioner supervised the planting of the trees that now adorns Washington Square and Ursulines Avenue. Three children have been born to Mr. and Mrs. Berthelot, of whom 2 sons died in early childhood. Their daughter, Louise Alice, married George U. Generou, who is a graduate of the Christian Brothers' College, Bay St. Louis, Miss. He occupies the position of bookkeeper and confidential clerk for Mr. Berthelot, and is a member of the school board of St. John the Baptist Parish. Seven children have been born to Mrs. Generou, namely: Louise, who is talented in elocution; Clifford Paul, Edward Joseph, Margaret Marie, and Ann Olivia. The sixth and seventh children were twins and died in infancy. Mr. Berthelot belongs to the Catholic Church, the Woodmen of the World and the Knights of Pythias. He has succeeded financially, and though he has encountered many discouraging obstacles, has risen to a position of importance entirely through his own efforts. He enjoys in a large measure the confidence and esteem of his fellow citizens, and his home at Lucy, in St. John the Baptist parish, is noted for its hospitality.

Fortier, Alcee, Louisiana: Comprising Sketches of Parishes, Towns, Events, Institutions, and Persons, Arranged in Cyclopedic Form, volume 3, Madison, Wis.: Century Historical Association, 1914, pp. 707-709.

Transcribed by Jim Cox